

**JOINT STAFF REPORT  
WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 7  
Columbia River Compact  
March 10, 2004**

**Purpose:** To review ongoing commercial fisheries and consider non-Indian commercial fishing seasons for salmon and sturgeon in the mainstem Columbia River and Select Areas.

**STOCK STATUS**

***Spring Chinook***

- Spring chinook primarily enter the lower Columbia River during March and April with upriver stock abundance peaking during the late March to early April timeframe.
- The preseason spring chinook run size forecasts include returns of 360,700 upriver stock (94% 4-year old) and 109,400 Willamette stock to the Columbia River mouth.
- The upriver spring chinook count through March 7 was 51 spring chinook. During 2000-2003 spring chinook counts at Bonneville Dam through March 7 ranged between 9-956 adults.
- Run sizes cannot be updated until late April for upriver stock and early May for Willamette stock.
- The Bonneville Dam count on March 7 was 42 spring chinook.

***Wild Winter Steelhead***

- Wild winter steelhead pass through the lower Columbia River primarily during January through early April and peak during late March.
- The preseason forecast was for a return of 32,200 wild winter steelhead to the Columbia River mouth.
- Wild winter steelhead passage over Willamette Falls has been good to date with daily counts ranging between 21-152 during the first six days of March with a total count of 5,754.
- Willamette wild winter steelhead typically represent 55% of the total wild winter steelhead return to the Columbia River with a range of 36-77% during 1993-2002.
- The steelhead Bonneville Dam count through March 7 was 1,093 steelhead which includes a small number of summers.

**WATER CONDITIONS**

- Columbia River flow, as measured at Bonneville Dam, ranged between 172 kcfs and 121 kcfs during the first nine days of March.

- Water temperatures measured at Bonneville Dam have ranged between 39°F and 40°F during the first seven days of March. The ten-year average for this time period is 43°F.
- Visibility measured at Bonneville Dam increased from five feet on March 4 to seven feet on March 9.

## FISHERY UPDATES

### *Non-Indian Salmon Commercial Demonstration Fishery*

- Three test fishing days occurred on February 22, February 29 and March 7 with all test fishers using 4- 1/4" tangle nets.
- Two 16 hour fishing periods occurred on March 2 (5:00 AM - 9:00 PM) and March 4-5 (3:00 PM - 7:00 AM), and a third 24 hour fishing period occurred March 8-9 (5 AM - 5 AM) with 9" minimum and 9- 3/4" maximum mesh size restrictions in effect for all three periods.
- Long-term mortality rates used to determine impact rates are the same as those recommended by the TAC: 40% for chinook and 30% for steelhead in large mesh (8" -9 3/4"), and 18.5% for chinook and steelhead in small mesh (≤4 1/4").
- Impacts to listed species during the first three fishing periods are estimated to be 0.033% for upriver spring chinook and 0.147% for wild winter steelhead. Total impacts to date represent 4% of the upriver spring chinook impact limit and 7% of the wild winter steelhead impact limit.
- Over the three fishing periods, a total of 1,177 chinook were kept and an estimated 13% were of upriver stock.
- The observed mark rate for chinook increased to 76% with a total observation of 32 chinook kept and 4 steelhead released for the most recent fishing period.

<i>Table 1. 2004 Spring Chinook Fishery Monitoring Data Summary</i>							
Fishing period (Zones 1 - 4)	Gear	Observer Data					
		Drifts	Chinook Kept	Chinook Released	Chinook Mark Rate *	Steelhead	Steelhead Mark Rate
Test Fishery Feb. 22	4 1/4"	21	3	2	60%	20	45%
Test Fishery Feb. 29	4 1/4"	22	8	2	80%	14	43%
<b>16 hr. Fishery Mar. 2</b>	9"	77	8	4	67%	4	25%
<b>16 hr. Fishery Mar. 4-5</b>	9"	95	26	17	60%	6	33%
Test Fishery Mar. 7	4 1/4"	19	5	4	56%	18	50%
<b>24 hr. Fishery Mar. 8-9</b>	9"	81	32	10	76%	4	0%

\*Percents of those fish for which marks could be determined.

- For three fishing periods a total of 75 sturgeon have been landed which leaves 225 sturgeon on the guideline.

<i>Chinook and Steelhead During 2003 Demonstration Fishery</i>											
Fishing Period	Gear	Del	Chinook Kept			Chinook Released			Steelhead Released		White Sturgeon
			Total	Upriver Stock	L River Stock	Total	Upriver Stock	L River Stocks	Total	Wild Winter	
Mar 2 (16 hr) + Mar 4-5 (16 hr)	9"	179	566	63	503	366	94	272	166	109	50
Mar 8-9 (24 hr)	9"	149	611	87	524	191	61	130	76	50	25
Total			1,177	150	1,027	557	155	402	242	159	75

### ***Select Area Fisheries***

- Total landings during the six fishing periods in Youngs Bay were 188 spring chinook and 5 white sturgeon and 27 spring chinook and 0 white sturgeon for four fishing periods in Blind Slough.
- Ex-vessel prices have averaged \$5.50/pound.
- Landings in Youngs Bay were low until the final period when 130 spring chinook were caught.
- The estimated impact to upriver spring chinook for Youngs Bay and Blind Slough winter seasons combined is estimated to be 0.001%. Of the 98 spring chinook sampled from Youngs Bay, 2 fish were of upriver origin. Of the 18 spring chinook sampled in Blind Slough, 1 was of upriver origin.
- Based on this low impact rate, the fishing industry has requested an extension of fishing time in these sites to maximize harvest of local stocks while ex-vessel prices are high.

### ***Spring Chinook Sport Fishery***

- Preliminary lower Columbia River sport catch estimates for February include 42 chinook kept, 31 released and 98 steelhead kept and 153 released from 9,700 angler trips.
- VSI includes 2/3 of chinook kept were of lower river origin.
- Effort is increasing and catch rate is slowly improving in March.

### ***2004 Smelt Fisheries***

- A Level 3 commercial smelt fishery in the mainstem Columbia River was adopted at the December 19, 2003 Compact hearing.
- The adopted fishery consists of four 18-hour fishing periods per week (3 AM-9 PM Sundays, Tuesday, Thursdays, and Fridays) and is scheduled to occur during January 1 - March 31, 2004.
- Some abundance of smelt reported near Clatskanie on Friday March 5 and in the Cowlitz over the weekend of March 6-7. Staff will continue to monitor the run.
- Observers monitoring Sunday's test fishery reported smelt tangled in the gear and high densities of gulls and marine mammals from County Line Park upstream to Abernathy creek. Additional reports suggest smelt may be spread out as far down as the estuary.

- 9,600 pounds of smelt were landed from the Cowlitz River Monday evening March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2004. Tributary landing to date are 115,00 pounds.
- 13,788 pounds of smelt have been landed from the Columbia River to date, with the most recent landing of 735 pounds reported on March 9, 2004.
- Management's intent is to evaluate stock status following this week's fishery.

## **FISHERY RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***Non-Indian Salmon Commercial Demonstration Fishery***

- The Joint Staff is recommending the following fishing period to allow the commercial fishery access to their Willamette River hatchery spring chinook allocation.

<b><i>Recommendation</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Joint Staff is proposing the following additional fishing period for the commercial demonstration fishery.</li> </ul>	
<b>Season:</b>	
<b>Area:</b>	<b>Mouth to Kelley Point (Zones 1-4)</b>
<b>Sanctuaries:</b>	<b>Grays River, Gnat Creek, Elokomina –B, Abernathy Creek, Cowlitz River, Kalama-B, and Lewis-B.</b>
<b>Gear:</b>	<b>Net length not to exceed 150 fathoms. 9” minimum and 9 - ¾’ maximum mesh size restrictions.</b>
<b>Allowable Sales:</b>	<b>Adipose fin-clipped chinook salmon and sturgeon. A maximum of 3 white sturgeon may be possessed or sold by each participating vessel.</b>
<b>Participants:</b>	<b>Columbia River commercial fishers with appropriate licenses and legal gear that attended a state-sponsored workshop concerning live captive commercial fishing techniques and possess a certificate that allows participation in this fishery.</b>
<b>Miscellaneous Regulations:</b>	<p><b>Soak times, defined as time elapsed from when first mesh enters the water to when last mesh leaves the water, must not exceed 45 minutes.</b></p> <p><b>Red corks are required at 25-fathom intervals and red corks must be in contrast to the corks used in the remainder of the net.</b></p> <p><b>Use of recovery boxes will be required on all lethargic or bleeding salmonids.</b></p> <p><b>Each participant will be required to have 2 operable recovery boxes or one box with two chambers in place to participate in this fishery. Operable recovery boxes will require a flow of 16-20 gallons per minute to the box or each chamber. Each box shall be operating during any time that the net is being retrieved or picked.</b></p> <p><b>Lighted buoys required on each end of nets being fished between sunset and sunrise.</b></p> <p><b>Quick reporting rule in effect for Washington buyers.</b></p>

- Monitoring and enforcement are easier during daylight hours. In the lower river (below Hammond), daylight hours are preferred by some because of the large numbers of crab pots in the area. Sport/commercial interactions increase during daylight hours.
- Nighttime periods may provide better fishing efficiency. The Columbia River is currently very clear thus heavier, multi-strand nets are more easily avoided by fish during the daylight hours. Nighttime hours will likely result in fewer observations during fishery monitoring, due to safety and navigation constraints.

### ***Blind Slough/Knappa Slough Select Area Commercial Fishery***

- Concurrent jurisdiction waters extend downstream from the Railroad Bridge in Blind Slough and encompass all of Knappa Slough and require Compact action.
- Oregon State waters extend upstream from the Railroad Bridge and require Oregon State action.
- An Oregon license is required in Oregon State waters and either an Oregon or Washington license is required in concurrent jurisdiction waters.

Recommendation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Joint Staff is recommending one additional fishing period in Blind Slough to occur from 7 PM Saturday March 13 to 7 AM Sunday March 14 (12 hours)</li></ul>

- ✓ This winter season extension is recommended to allow additional harvest opportunity on local stocks when market value is high while minimizing impacts to upriver spring chinook.
- ✓ The estimated catch for this season is 20 spring chinook in Blind Slough.
- ✓ Expected impacts to upriver spring chinook for the season extension would be 0.002% in Blind Slough.
- ✓ Combined winter season impacts for all SAFE areas are expected to be <0.004% (0.5% of the non-Indian commercial allocation).
- ✓ Weekend fishing periods during the winter season eliminate overlapping open fishing periods for mainstem and Select Areas.

### ***Youngs Bay Select Area Commercial Fishery***

- All waters in this fishing area are Oregon State waters and require Oregon State action.
- An Oregon license is required to participate in this fishery.

Recommendation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Joint Staff is recommending one additional fishing period in Youngs Bay to occur from 6 PM Saturday March 13 to noon Sunday March 14 (18 hours)</li></ul>

- ✓ This winter season extension is recommended to allow additional harvest opportunity on local stocks when market value is high while minimizing impacts to upriver spring chinook.
- ✓ The estimated catch for this season is 200 spring chinook in Youngs Bay.
- ✓ Expected impacts to upriver spring chinook for the Youngs Bay season extension would be 0.002%.
- ✓ Combined winter season impacts for all SAFE areas are expected to be <0.004% (0.5% of the non-Indian commercial allocation).
- ✓ Weekend fishing periods during the winter season eliminate overlapping open fishing periods for mainstem and Select Areas.

## **NEXT COMPACT HEARING**

- The Joint Staff is recommending a Compact hearing for Monday March 15, the time to be determined.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
March 10, 2004